AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

1-55. (CANCELLED)

56. (ORIGINAL) A retractable vehicle step assist, comprising:

a first support arm;

a second support arm;

said first support arm and said second support arm connectable with respect to an underside of a vehicle so as to be pivotable about a first axis oriented generally parallel to the ground and a second axis oriented generally parallel to the ground, respectively; and

a step member having an upper stepping surface, said first support arm and said second support arm connected to said step member so that said first support arm and said second support arm are pivotable with respect to said step member about a third axis and a fourth axis, respectively, said fourth axis located inboard from said third axis;

said first support arm and said second support arm allowing said step member to move between a retracted position and a deployed position downward and outboard from said retracted position;

wherein, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, said first axis and said third axis define a first line and said second axis and said fourth axis define a second line, said first line and said second line intersecting at an instantaneous center of rotation of said step member;

wherein, when said step member is in said retracted position, said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of said upper stepping surface, and outboard of said first axis.

57. (ORIGINAL) A retractable vehicle step assist, comprising:

a first support arm;

a second support arm;

said first support arm and said second support arm connectable with respect to an underside of a vehicle so as to be pivotable about a first axis oriented generally parallel to the ground and a second axis oriented generally parallel to the ground, respectively; and

a step member having an upper stepping surface, said first support arm and said second support arm connected to said step member so that said first support arm and said second support arm are pivotable with respect to said step member about a third axis and a fourth axis, respectively, said fourth axis located inboard from said third axis;

said first support arm and said second support arm allowing said step member to move between a retracted position and a deployed position downward and outboard from said retracted position;

wherein at least a portion of said upper stepping surface initially moves upward as said step member moves from said retracted position to said deployed position.

58. (ORIGINAL) A retractable vehicle step assist, comprising:

a first support arm;

a second support arm;

said first support arm and said second support arm connectable with respect to an underside of a vehicle so as to be pivotable about a first axis oriented generally parallel to the ground and a second axis oriented generally parallel to the ground, respectively; and

a step member having an upper stepping surface, said first support arm and said second support arm connected to said step member so that said first support arm and said second support arm are pivotable with respect to said step member about a third axis and a fourth axis, respectively, said fourth axis located inboard from said third axis;

said first support arm and said second support arm allowing said step member to move between a retracted position and a deployed position downward and outboard from said retracted position;

wherein said upper stepping surface follows a deployment path as said step member moves from said retracted position to said deployed position, said deployment path including an initial upward component.

59. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of an inboard quarter of said upper stepping surface, when said step member is in said retracted position.

60. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of an inboard half of said upper stepping surface, when said step member is in said retracted position.

61. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of an inboard two-thirds of said upper stepping surface, when said step member is in said retracted position.

62. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of an entirety of said upper stepping surface, when said step member is in said retracted position.

63. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of an entirety of said upper stepping surface, when said step member is in said retracted position.

64. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said upper stepping surface is located outboard of a door of said vehicle, when said step member is in said retracted position.

65. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 64, wherein an entirety of said upper stepping surface is located outboard of said door, when said step member is in said retracted position.

66. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said first axis is spaced from said third axis by a first distance, said second axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a second distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said first distance and said second distance are unequal.

67. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said first axis is spaced from said second axis by a third distance, and said third axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a fourth distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said third distance and said fourth distance are unequal.

68. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein said first line and said second line are non-parallel when said step member is in said deployed position.

69. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 56, wherein at least a portion of said upper stepping surface initially moves upward as said step member moves from said retracted position to said deployed position.

70. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 57 wherein, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, said first axis and said third axis define a first line and said second axis and said fourth axis define a second line, said first line and said second line intersecting at an instantaneous center of rotation of said step member;

wherein, when said step member is in said retracted position, said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of said upper stepping surface.

71. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 70, wherein said first line and said second line are non-parallel when said step member is in said deployed position.

72. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 57, wherein said upper stepping surface is located outboard of a door of said vehicle, when said step member is in said retracted position.

73. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 72, wherein an entirety of said upper stepping surface is located outboard of said door, when said step member is in said retracted position.

74. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 57, wherein said first axis is spaced from said third axis by a first distance, said second axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a second distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said first distance and said second distance are unequal.

75. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 57, wherein said first axis is spaced from said second axis by a third distance, and said third axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a fourth distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said third distance and said fourth distance are unequal.

76. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 58 wherein, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, said first axis and said third axis define a first line and said second axis and said fourth axis define a second line, said first line and said second line intersecting at an instantaneous center of rotation of said step member;

wherein, when said step member is in said retracted position, said instantaneous center of rotation is located at or inboard of said upper stepping surface.

77. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 76, wherein said first line and said second line are non-parallel when said step member is in said deployed position.

78. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 58, wherein said upper stepping surface is located outboard of a door of said vehicle, when said step member is in said retracted position.

79. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 78, wherein an entirety of said upper stepping surface is located outboard of said door, when said step member is in said retracted position.

80. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 58, wherein said first axis is spaced from said third axis by a first distance, said second axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a second distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said first distance and said second distance are unequal.

81. (ORIGINAL) The step assist of Claim 58, wherein said first axis is spaced from said second axis by a third distance, and said third axis is spaced from said fourth axis by a fourth distance, as said step assist is viewed in a plane perpendicular to said first axis, and said third distance and said fourth distance are unequal.